...Our Boys and Girls...

EDITED BY AUNT BUSY.

This department is conducted solely in the interest of our girl and boy readers.

Aunt Busy is glad to hear any time from the nieces and nephews who read this page, and to give them all the advice and help in her power.

Write on one side of the paper only.

Do not have letters too long.

Original stories and verses will be gladly received and carefully edited.

The manuscripts of contributions not accepted will be returned.

Address all letters to Aunt Busy, Intermountain Catholic, Salt Lake City.

THE KERRY COWARD.

Mike Carney sat loosely on a heap of slag during the last two minutes of the noon hour, the empty dinner pail which hung from his locked fingers swinging backward nad forward rhythmically between his knees. His blue eyes, looking straight ahead, held that blending of guilelessness and mysticism which is the birthright of a religious people. Down to the end of his short nose Mike's face might have been a fit study of a fifteenth century monk, but his mouth belied all that, apparently having been formed for no other reason on earth but to whistle an Irish jig, and the sight of it thus engaged was sufficient to cure one forever of the idea that life was dull.

At present his lips puckered more than once, but only a lone note, which seemed to have gone astray from the rest of the tune. Something began to grow in his eyes, burning away their mysticism and revealing a substratum of quicksilver.

"'Tisn't fair, be gob!"

He stood up and faced the brick wall opposite, as though it was the president of the wire works himself.

"'Tis chance enough the workin'man has to take, anyhow—"

His voice stopped as if broken. Cringed into himself, he sank back on the slag, torn between the conviction that "'twasn't fair" and the Irishman's inherent abhorrence of "informing."

"An', sure, where'd be the use?" he soliloquized, his mental attitude seeming to descend despondently with his body. "Don't they know 'tis done, an' every day, too?"

But an hour later, when the foreman ordered him to replace a large belt from a shafting to a countershaft while the machinery was in motion, Carney looked him quietly in the eyes and refused.

His glance had measured the danger first. It was a particularly ugly job, crammed near the ceiling, compared to which the belt he had replaced that morning was as child's play.

"You'll not do it?"

"Not while she's runnin' I'll not do it."

The foreman's strong young hands closed and unclosed at his sides. He was ten years the Irishman's junior, with his record still to make. The eyes which answered Mike's narrowed to points of steel. For a moment the two men regarded each other with a peculiarly still, flat look.

"You Kerry coward!"

The measured words were like the hiss of escaping steam scalding the Irishman's face. All the fighting blood of his race showed in the one unloosed shaft of blue that leaped from his eyes. Like a felled log the foreman went down.

Very quietly Mike picked up his belongings and left the shop. Not even the certainty that he had lost his job and the beating thought of five small mouths at home to be fed could quell the fierce satisfaction in what he had done. For an hour he walked, hugging it savagely to his breast. Then, as he ascended the steps of his tenement, it seemed suddenly to ooze out at his finger's tips. Nora's eyes, while she stood on the small piazza hanging out clothes, were as mirrors from which all the grim, bare facts attendant on being "out of a job" looked back at him with cruel distinctiveness.

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Margaret Hartman leaned her arms on the table and looked across the silver and cut glass at her husband. Her white face and wide open eyes still held the tremulousness of one who had recently been in the darkness of a great fear.

"But the man," Hartman said, fingering his glass—"I wish you had found out his name, Constance."

"I know, dear. But, Henry"—her hand went to her heart. Hartman felt reproached as he watched the added pallor of her face—"oh, it was all so sudden, so awful, those mad horses with the trailing harness and wrecked carriage, the fearful recklessness of it, as they came down the street! And then, when baby left Anna and came toddling unconsciously across to where I sat on the piazza—"

"There, dear, don't go over it any more." Hartman came around the table and put his hand on his wife's shoulder.

"The man," she went on, after a pause, "has been hanging around here lately. I have fancied sometimes that he wished to speak to you or me. When I had baby safely in my arms I looked at him he had the kindliest blue eyes—and saw that he was very white. But when I asked him if he had been hurt he said no, only a 'bit of a bruise' where the shaft grazed his shoulder. It was the quickness and coolness with which he did it, Henry, that stunned me. And no sooner had he grabbed baby than his mouth puckered in the funniest way, and he sauntered up to me whistling an Irish jig."

Hartman's brows drew together.

"It couldn't be—of course, not—"

"Who, dear?"

"Carney, my little jig whistler. And that reminds me that I haven't seen him around since I got home."

The superintendent of the Leffington wire works went quickly into the library. A moment later his wife heard him calling up his assistant by telephone.

Mike stood in the Hartman library two hours later. His sensitive face worked as he turned a shabby hat round and round by the brim.

"Oh, sure, 'twas nothing, ma'am. I've got five o' thim meself at home," he said deprecatingly.

"How does it happen that you're not working, Carney?" The superintendent looked at him keenly.

"Well, sir, you see, 'twas this way: Meself an' Harrington had a bit of a disagreement about a belt, and—a—"

"Well?"

Hartman's eyes held his, compelling the truth.

"Mr. Hartman, sir"—the words rushed from the Kerry coward in a choking blurt—"I once seen a man tore to bits doing what Harrington bid me do. I'll not deny that it's hungry the childer 've been sometimes since I've not had a steady job, but 'tis hungrier they'd be if I wasn't here at all, an'—I couldn't take the chance."

"You don't have to take the chance." Hartman was pacing the floor with hands thrust deep into his pockets, the veins on his forehead knotted. "No man who works under me will be asked to take chances that I would not take myself. Did Harrington discharge you for that?" He wheeled suddenly, facing Mike.

"No, sir; no, Mr. Hartman, sir. We had a few words first, an' Harrington he called me a Kerry coward, an'—I hit him a lick."

"Did you, though?" There was relish in the superintendent's voice.

"Oh, sure, 'tisn't harm I'd want to be doin' him," Mike put in quickly. "The lad is a dacent lad enough, an' knowledgable, too; only a bit young, an', sure, that'll mend."

Hartman followed him to the door.

"Come down to the works in the morning, Carney, and we'll see if we can't find something for you that'll keep the 'childer' from being nungry in future," he said, genially. "As to what you did for me this afternoon—I can't speak of that yet."

Margaret Hartman pushed her husband aside and, taking Mike's hand, raised it to her lips.

"He called you a Kerry coward," she said, with heaving breast, while Mike stood transfixed by the beauty of her tear-filled eyes, "but I call you the bravest man—the bravest man—that ever lived!"

When Mike reached the street he stood and looked at his hand in the moonlight.

"Wisha, now, to think of that," he said reverently. "Faith, I dunno but I'm glad he called me a Kerry coward."—M. Louise Cummins in The Catholic Messenger.

If There Were No Santa Claus.

Long before it's Christmas time, we children always get
So nervous-like and anxious that we tease around and fret,
Till mother gets distracted and a little mad, I fear,
And says she almost wishes Santa wouldn't stop this year.
But I know she doesn't mean it, and I told her so one day,
When she sort o' flew to pieces and got talking jes' that way;
I know she doesn't meant it, though she says it, all because
'Twould be mighty lonesome Christmas if there were no Santa Claus.

Take it on these winter evenings, when we toddle off to bed;
When the good-night kiss is given and the evening prayer is said;
When the moon shines through the window and they've left us all alone,
Then we kind o' get to talking in a solemn undertone.
Why, we always speak of Santa and we wonder what he'll bring,
We know he'll guess our wishes and will not forget a thing.
So, we keep on at our chatter till the dream-man calls a pause—
'Twould be mighty lonesome Christmas if there were no Santa Claus.

So, when mother gets excited 'cause we children fret around,
And chides us for our nonsense and scolds us good and sound;
When she says she's dreading Christmas and heaves a heavy sigh
As she says she hopes old Santa will whip up and jes' drive by;
I know, perhaps, we're naughty and our actions may offend,
But Santa Claus can really count on mother as a friend.
She wouldn't have him skip us on a Christmas Eve—because
'Twould be mighty lonesome Christmas if there were no Santa Claus.

The Lesson of Christmas.

Let us enjoy Christmas to the utmost, with hearty good will and thankfulness. Let us, one and all, give full scope to all our best impulses of affection for family, kindred and the brotherhood of humanity. Christmas comes but once a year, and it should come not only to warrant a day or a week of feasting and the exchange of gifts, but as a recurring lesson, teaching us a broader spirit of charity and benevolence to those whom fortune has forgotten to favor, and of compassion for the erring and weak, as well as love for the institutions—largely founded on the principles of justice and right taught by Him whose birth is this day commemorated—under which we are free, prosperous and happy.

The Chistmas Goose.

When comes the Yuletide season,
The Christmas goose we sing!
All laden down with juices brown,
A toothsome offering.

A Christmas goose—some argue—
Is every trusting child,
Who Santa Claus adores because
His socks with gifts are piled.

A Christmas goose—they'll tell you—
Well known to all is he!
Poor patient dad, whose purse must add
To every charity.

A Christmas goose—not really—
Is mother, anxiously
At work with zest, so fearful lest
Forgotten some may be.

The Christmas goose—why, he's
The biggest goose, I fear,
Who naught will spend upon a friend—Nor love
nor sympathy will lend
On the best day of the year.

—May Kelly, in Woman's Home Companion for December.

What You Should Practice.

Keep your own secrets, if you have any.

When you speak to a person look him or her in the face.

Drink no kind of intoxicating liquors.

Ever live (misfortunes excepted) within your income.

Avoid temptation, through fear you may not withstand it.

Never borrow if you can possibly avoid it.

Keep yourself innocent if you would be happy.

When you retire to bed think over what you have done during the day.

Read over the above maxims at least once a week.

The Christmas Masses.

In missionary countries priests are granted the very special privilege of celebrtaing two masses on Sundays and holidays of obligation when a number of the faithful would otherwise be deprived of assisting at mass. On Christmas day every priest enjoys the privilege of celebrating three masses, even though the same congregation may assist at all of them.

Catholic Ceremonies thus explains the privilege: "The Catholic faith recognizes three substances in Jesus Christ," says Innocent III. (Serm. III. in Nat. Domini), "the divinity, the flesh and the soul. The Scriptures speak of the three births of the Son of God; His divine birth in the bosom of His Father; His birth according to the flesh of the Virgin Mary; His spiritual life in our souls. The mystery of these three births is represented to us by the three masses celebrated by the Church on this day."

A Belgian Christmas Legend.

The children of Belgium have a charming Christmas legend about Santa Claus' pony. They always place their wooden sabots on the window ledge, stuffed full of oats, hay and fodder for the "Dear Christmas Pony." In the early morning they run on tiptoe to look; and behold! the hay is all gone, and the shoes are brimming over with toys and sweetmeats. Then the children clap their hands with glee and wish they could only have waked in time to see the pony munching his oats. That would have been such fun!

Conundrums.

When was a piece of wood like George V? When it was made into a ruler.

What is that which no man wishes to have, yet never wishes to lose? A bald head.

What is the difference between a French pastry cook and a billposter? One puffs up paste and the other pastes up puffs.

What is the first thing a man sets in his garden? His foot.

Why are some men like pipes? Because they are mere sham.

If a man bumped his head against the top of the room, what stationery article would he get? Ceiling whacks (sealing wax).

What is a good thing to part with? A comb.

Why is the Bank of England like a thrush? Because it often changes its notes.

Spoke to the Class.

Pauline, who had been attending school for almost two weeks, was telling of the misbehavior of some of her little classmates. At her mother's question as to whether it had ever been necessary for the teacher to speak to her, Pauline answered quickly: "Oh, no, mamma." Then, "She had to speak to all the class but me this afternoon."

"Why, what did she say?"

"Oh, she said, 'Now, children, we'll wait until Pauline is in order.'"

His First Words.

"I guess," remarked simple old Farmer Hoe, "that we'd better have Andrew stop studyin' so hard. 'Tain't good for his mind."

"I haven't noticed anything onusual," answered his wife.

"No? But I have. When he comes home from school for his holidays, after travelin' scores and scores of miles, what do ye think his fust words was?"

"I d'no."

"He says, 'Well, father, I'm half-back now.'

"I looked at 'im, and I says, 'What do ye mean?'

"'Just what I say. I'm halfback.'

"I says: 'Andrew, don't ye realize whare ye are? Ye ain't half back. Ye're all the way back and I'm glad to see ye, too.' And all he done was to jes' laugh and say he'd tell me all about it some time."

First English Piano Made by Monk.

The idea of the piano was conceived independently about the same time by three persons in different parts of Europe—Schroter, German organist; Marius, French harpsichord maker, and Bartolomeo Christofali, harpsichord maker of Padua. Priority of invention (1714) is due to the Italian maker.

Schroter's discovery was followed up in Germany by Silbermann of Strasburg, Spat of Ratisbon, Stein of Augsburg, and others.

The first piano seen in England was made at Rome by Father Wood, an English monk there.

Origin of Some Words.

The lemon, it is said, takes its name from the city of Lima.

Loadstone is a corrupt translation of Lydius lapus, the stone of Lydia.

The word money reminds us that the coinage of the Romans was struck at the temple of Juno Monieta, the goddess of counsel.

"Dollar" is from the German thaler, which is derived from Thal, the valley of Joachim, in Bohemia, where the silver works were situated that made this coin.

The word "panic" has a curious origin. According to Herodotus, the god Pan was supposed to have assisted the Greeks at the battle of Marathon, 490 B. C., striking such a terror into the Persian host that they fled to their ships in perfect dismay. From that time the Greek word panikon was used to describe unreasonable or sudden and overpowering fear.

Good Resolutions.

Good resolutions are never a short cut to good works. Carefully thought out plans and earnestly made resolves are valuable only as they bring into plain sight the duties that we ought to be doing. They are worse than useless when we let them take the place of duty doing, as we so often do.

A man will, on his way from his house to his office at the beginning of the day, make such good plans and resolves for that day by the time he reaches his office he has unconsciously let himself think that the hardest part of the work is already done, and then the real doing of it evaporates in the glow of the plan making.

It is better for most people to spend more of their time on what needs to be done than on planning when and how they will do it. An unplanned duty done is better than a duty that always remains planned for.

A Christmas Prayer.

O Blessed Child, keep me child-like, but give me of Thy strength. Let me hold to Thee, and not to any of my fellow-creatures. Let me not demand of my fellows that they fill the needs which Thou alone canst fill. Let me not put my trust in millionaires, or middlemen, or politicians. Be with me in light on my own affairs, temporal and spiritual. Be with me in strength to bear my own responsibilities and to stand on my own feet.

Seven Kinds of Christmas Givers.

First—Those who give spontaneously and generously, but only to themselves—auto-givers, they might be called.

Second—Those who give thoughtlessly, without any real or high motive—givers of the occasion, as it were.

Third—Those who give as a sop to conscience and self-esteem; in a species of atonement for the evil they do—penitential givers.

Fourth—Those who give as a matter of display, to win public applause for their generosity—theatrical givers.

Fifth—Those who give because others give, because they are expected to give and are ashamed not to give, and therefore give grudgingly—conventional givers.

Sixth—Those who give because they feel they ought to give; who give through a sense of duty, and not through love—moral givers.

Seventh—Those who give in the spirit of Jesus; who give because they love their neighbor as themselves, and above all things desire to help him—spiritual givers.

To which kind do you belong?—The New Freeman.

The Telewriter.

An ingenious instrument called the telewriter has been installed in London and promises to revolutionize present-day telegraph and telephone methods. By means of a telewriter one may send a message which will be permanently recorded by the instrument of the person to whom the message is sent.

The telewriter provides a transmitter and receiver, each provided with a pencil controlled by jointed arms, on the "pantograph" principle; and what a man writes or draws on the transmitter appears simultaneously in fac simile on the receiver. There is no noise, no room for misunderstanding, no delay, no telegraph messenger; all that is necessary is to hang up the telephone receiver and so bring the telewriter into play.

The Italians have a proverb—"Hear, see and say nothing, if you wish to live in peace."

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

(Continued from Page 1.)

with their greetings and good wishes to homes where there is not only an abundance, but a superabundance of the goods of this world. To the home of the poor, so like his own, the Infant Savior brings cheer by telling them "they are blessed." Forgotten and neglected, and before his advent treated as slaves amongst his great works, he proclaimed that "the poor had the gospel preached to them."

It is no wonder, then, that on that day of joy and gladness the greetings, "Merry Christmas," should be so often repeated, but the lessons they contain should not be overlooked. The greetings imply a three-fold obligation, namely, that man is at peace with God, the world and his own conscience. It imposes a duty, too, namely, that those who can afford it should seek out some needy families, enter their homes, as the Savior and His Virgin Mother would do, if they were here on earth, cheer them not by words alone, but by gifts which they need, thereby making their Christmas a merry one. One complying with this duty can truly hope to share in the joys and blessings of Christmas, and receive a foretaste of the unending bliss and happiness that await the just in heaven. Merry, joyous and blissful Christmas are The Intermountain Catholic's greetings to all its readers.

F. D.